

**B
A
N
D
W
A
G
O
N**

Jan.

Feb.

1967

**Tom
MIX
Circus**
and
**WILD
WEST**



TOM MIX *and the WONDER HORSE "TONY" in person*

CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Vol. 11, No. 1

January-February, 1967

Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor

Joseph T. Bradbury, Associate Editor

Fred D. Pfening, III, Associate Editor

Publication, Advertising and Circulation office located at 2515 Dorset Road, Columbus, Ohio 43221. Advertising rates: Full page \$30.00; half page \$18.50; quarter page \$10.00. Minimum ad \$5.00.

Annual subscription fees for the Bandwagon are \$6.00 and are due each May 1. Subscriptions received during the year will be charged the following: Those received in May-June, \$6.00; July-August, \$5.00; September-October, \$4.00; November-December, \$3.00; January-February, \$2.00 and March-April, \$1.00. Single copies \$1.00.

CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC., Robert Parkinson, President, Route 2, Box 309, Baraboo, Wisc. 53913; Gaylord Hartman, Vice President, 1056 Jefferson Ave., Washington, Penna. 15301; Julian Jimenez, Treasurer, 1325 Commercial St., Atchison, Kan. 66002; John W. Boyle, Secretary, 3844 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44115.

DIRECTORS, DIV. 1 — Richard E. Conover, 927 Oakland Dr., Xenia, Ohio 45385 (Mich., Ohio, Ind.); **DIV. 2** — Paul R. Horsman, Jr., Fryeburg, Me. 04474 (Maine, Vt., N.H., Mass., R.I., Conn., Del.); **DIV. 3** — James Hassan, 6036 Webster St., West Philadelphia, Penna. 19143 (N.J., N.Y., Penna., Va., Md., Wash. D.C., W.Va., Ky.); **DIV. 4** — Freddie Daw, 245 Catalonia Ave., Coral Gables, Fla. 33134 (N.C., S.C., Ga., Ala., Fla., Miss., Tenn., Ark., La.); **DIV. 5** — Orlo J. Rahn, 405 S. Lincoln Ave., Davenport, Iowa 52804 (Wisc., Ill., Minn., Iowa, Mo.); **DIV. 6** — Ned E. Atchison, 217 E. Walnut, Columbus, Kan. 66725 (N.D., S.D., Nebr., Kan., Okla., Tex.); **DIV. 7** — Glenn R. Draper, 727 Albion, Burley, Ida. 83318 (Mont., Ida., Wyo., Colo., N.M., Utah, Nev., Ariz.); **DIV. 8** — Charles W. (Chang) Reynolds, 1706 Wagner St., Pasadena, Calif. 91106 (Wash., Ore., Calif.); **DIV. 9** — Edward W. Cripps, 159 Morrell St., Brantford, Ont., Canada (Canada).

THIS MONTH'S COVER

The lithograph reproduced on the cover of this issue was used by the Tom Mix Circus during its first tour in 1935.

This poster was designed and printed by the Donaldson Litho Co. Burt Wilson Collection.

Kelly BRIEF of Henry & Alf T. Ringling Inheritance Tax Case. Includes calendar of routes and exhibitions of Ringling Circuses, 1884-1923. Thirty-five (35) pages, lists of circuses, over 90 listed.

\$1.25 postpaid
BANNER LINE Special

The above plus
11 issues of Banner Line, World's Only
Twice A Month Circus Publication
11 old time circus pics
12 old time circus routes
1 Kelly Miller 8x10 Display Advertising Layout
1 Kelly Miller 8x10 Press Release
1 Von Bros. 1964 Souvenir Program
1 postcard size color photo of ASIA bandwagon

Entire Banner Line Special
\$5 postpaid
Van Matre, 3328 "H" St.
Philadelphia, Pa. 19134

NEW MEMBERS

- No. 1588 Dominie L. Yodice
90-23 199th Street
Hollis, Queens, N.Y. 10023
- No. 1589 John L. Broeker
1711 E. Chicago St.
Elgin, Ill. 60120
- No. 1590 Roland H. Ellis, Jr.
R.F.D. #1
Underhill, Vt. 05489
- No. 1591 William H. O'Brien
196 Boulevard
Middletown, R.I. 02843
- No. 1592 Copeland MacAllister
118 Beacon St.
Framingham, Mass. 01701

Freddie Daw's All-Circus Catalog, 3-hole punched for adding new pages when printed. Subscribers will receive 3-Ring Letters when published and all new pages FREE OF CHARGE. Send only \$2.00 to the address below for your subscription. Great for 1/4 scale model builders.

Freddie Daw Circus Hobby Hall
245 Catalonia Ave. Coral Gables, 34, Fla.

- No. 1593 Charles O. Brinckley
1010 Oakley Ave.
Elgin, Illinois 60122
- No. 1594 E. A. Mitchener
Baker College
Hornsby, N.S.W.
Australia
- No. 1595 Kenneth R. Dunn
1303 S. Willett St.
Memphis, Tenn.
- No. 1596 John F. Sherman
9916 Wildwood Rd.
Kensington, Md. 20795
- No. 1597 Raymond La Rouche
338 North Main St.
Woonsocket, R.I.
- No. 1598 John Krill
112 Murry Hill Dr.
Lancaster, Penna. 17601

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

In the very near future each CHS member will receive a ballot in the mail, proposing extensive amendments to our society by-laws. These by-laws changes were developed by a committee consisting of Sverre Braathen, Halie Olstadt and Bob Parkinson, as authorized by the Board of Directors at the last convention. When you see this ballot, do not write to us and complain that it is too long and complicated. We know that many will have this initial reaction, and you don't need to write to tell us what we already know. On the other hand, this committee has carried out a very genuine study of our by-laws and the serious faults that currently exist in them. We will not elaborate on these problems here, as they will be properly set forth in the upcoming communication.

What we do want to say here is that these weaknesses must be corrected or our growing society will stumble into very confusing and awkward situations. Like most official documents, these matters cannot be resolved in a few simple words. Situations must be anticipated and means to cope with them set forth in written rules and procedures. These rules must be clear; they must be fair; they must be operable and serviceable amongst a scattered membership that cannot meet in one place as a self ruling body to resolve problems. Our society must be self perpetuating. It must provide leadership where none volunteer as well as orderly selection when competition arises. All this must be unmistakably set forth in written law, and this is not done in a casual or general manner that leaves much to the imagination.

The above committee has striven to meet these needs; they have given the matter much time and thought; they believe every phrase to be meaningful and believe the members will find the new proposals to be wise and beneficial.

It will all go for nothing, however, if members reject it at the outset because they refuse to read or understand what is set forth. Resolve now that you will give these by-laws your careful and responsible consideration. Send the kids to a movie. Settle down in a comfortable chair with your pipe and turn off the TV so you won't be distracted. Dis-

miss the day's chores from your mind and bear no preconceived notions. You will encounter some new ideas and broad changes in these proposals. In the proper frame of mind, we suspect you will become genuinely interested in what you are reading. In any event, the time you carefully devote to these proposals will stand as your investment in the future of a sound Circus Historical Society. The committee recommends the approval of all these amendments. We think, in the end, if given the time and thought necessary, you will understand, and agree with the committee. Thank you.

Bob Parkinson

DUES INCREASE

Effective May 1, 1967 annual dues for the Circus Historical Society will be \$6.00 per member. This is an increase of \$1.00 per year. This step has been approved by your Board of Directors by a vote of 8 to 1. Your officers and directors have kept a close eye on the expenses of the society, which, of course, are mostly Bandwagon expenses. It is clear that an increase in dues is required now to maintain the quality of our magazine and meet other responsibilities of the society.

Some directors thought the increase should be more than \$1.00 so as to avoid the possible necessity of yet another raise later on. There is merit to this viewpoint, but the prevailing thought was to increase dues only as was presently necessary. The members should not, however, assume that this dues rate will hold indefinitely. We will be governed by conditions not wholly under our control, and future administrations of the society may have to take further steps.

Incidentally, every effort towards economy is being followed. Earlier proposals to remunerate the Secretary and Treasurer are being postponed. We will await the benefit of further experience before finally deciding this measure. We believe the quality of The Bandwagon is paramount, and prefer not to add new society expenses at a time when Bandwagon costs are themselves rising. We know members will understand and cooperate.

Regarding new members, the existing membership blanks will continue to be used until August 1, 1967. This, in effect, permits new members to join at the regular dues rate without the membership fee of an added \$1.00. It will be an encouragement for people to join now, and an incentive for a membership drive, before the rate for new members jumps to \$7.00 in August. More on a full scale membership drive will be announced in the March-April Bandwagon issue.

Bob Parkinson
President

1967 CONVENTION

President Parkinson announces that the 1967 CHS convention will be held in Baraboo, Wisconsin, Thursday and Friday, July 6th and 7th. The Board of Directors of the CHS voted approval of this decision by a vote of 8-0, the 9th director not expressing himself on the

subject. A truly worthy program is being developed. The banquet will be Thursday evening; business sessions Friday AM and (if needed) Friday afternoon. Special presentations and projects particularly beneficial to circus historians and collectors will be presented Friday evening. There will be facilities at the Baraboo Elks Club for bull room exhibits. More details will be announced later. The Museum circus train will unload in Baraboo July 5th. We can promise startling new museum events to amaze you in 1967.

Members are asked to make their own lodging arrangements. If you want a listing of available lodging accommodations in and near Baraboo, write Bob Parkinson, Route 2 Box 309, Baraboo, Wisconsin. Act early on lodging reservations because Baraboo is in a resort area, and facilities may be scarce if you wait until the last minute.

HALL OF FAME AWARDS ANNOUNCED

The 1967 Circus Hall of Fame Awards were announced on January 10, at the opening performance of the Ringling-Barnum circus in Venice, Florida.

They are Ernestine Clarke Baer, of Tarzana, California; Jorgen Christensen, of Rochester, Indiana and Matthew B. Buckley, who died in 1897.

Ernestine Clarke is well known as a flyer on the Ringling-Barnum show, but had appeared on Al G. Barnes, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Tom Mix and Cole Bros. earlier. She followed her father Ernest Clarke, who had been elected to the Hall of Fame a few years ago.

Jorgen M. Christensen is a member of the CHS and has attended recent conventions. He began his career in 1904 with a Danish Circus. He brought a 24 horse act to America in 1923 for the Ringling-Barnum show. For that show he later produced a "Carousel" act featuring 39 horses, 27 ponies, four zebras and five camels. He appeared with Cole Bros. and Arthur Bros. railroad shows as well as others before retiring in 1957.

Matthew B. Buckley came to America from England in 1825 and first appeared in the Broadway Circus. In 1826 he became co-owner of the Buckley-Weeks Circus. He was one of the founders and operators of the Zoological Institute in 1835, and was a resident of Delavan, Wisconsin.

Mr. Christensen was present for the awards, Ernestine Clarke Baer was represented by her mother, Elizabeth Hanneford Clarke. Col. Bill Naramore made the awards, Fred Pfening was on hand representing the awards selection committee.

INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS MEETING

The Gesellschaft der Circusfreunde in Deutschland (German CFA) has announced the scheduling of an international convention of circus fans, according to their past president, Fritz Dillenberg.

The meeting will be held in Kaiserslautern from May 26 to 28, 1967. The traditions of the first and second international meetings in London and Paris will continue with many of

the same representatives attending. A full program has been planned including a post convention tour of German and French circuses.

Those interested in attending may contact: Fritz Dillenberg, 1 Berlin 27, Marzahnstrasse 21, West Berlin.

Hard-Back CIRCUS BOOKS

THE CRISTIANIS (Hubler)	\$5.95
PERFORMING HORSES (Fox)	4.95
CIRCUS (R-B-B)	2.00
TICKET TO THE CIRCUS (Fox)	4.95
STORY OF MR. CIRCUS (Hunt)	3.50
CIRCUS DOCTOR (Henderson)	4.95
SAWDUST & SPANGLES (Coup)	5.00
JOHN RINGLING (Thomas)	3.50

Add 25c for postage & handling

PRICE LISTS

1/8" Wagon Kits & Figures	10c
1/4" Wagon Kits & Figures	10c
Circusiana (books, photos, etc.)	10c
35mm Circus Slides	10c

AL HALPERN

1802 Chanticleer Road

Anaheim

Cal. 92804

AVAILABLE BACK ISSUES OF BANDWAGON MAGAZINE

1961	March-April Sept.-Oct.-Nov. December
1962	March-April May-June July-August September-October November-December
1963	January-February March-April May-June July-August September-October November-December
1964	January-February March-April May-June July-August September-October November-December
1965	January-February March-April May-June July-August September-October November-December
1966	January-February March-April May-June July-August September-October November-December

Above issues 85c each

Please Add 75c Postage

Circus Historical Society

2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43221

Review of the 1966 Season

By TOM PARKINSON

For circuses, this was a season of holding. By and large the business held its own—made little progress or growth, suffered little loss over-all and probably came out ahead financially.

There were foldings but probably not an undue number. There were successes but not many. The year won't go down in the records as anything extraordinary.

The problems were the familiar ones. Agents and promoters of ability were rare. There was no oversupply of capable people for any of the staff and managerial jobs around a circus, nor were there enough workingmen. Local sponsors seemed essential in the eyes of most show owners, yet such auspices were fewer and harder to sign.

If the total number of circus titles on the road was about the same as in other recent seasons, there were fewer that stood out as well-framed, attractive winners. And more of them gravitated toward the norm of ten or a dozen trucks and an 80 with three middles.

It was tough on the family-style shows. Cristianis were scattered around with a half-dozen shows. Beers-Barnes families threatened to quit or sell. The Hunt family show made a comeback, only to sell out. The Mills Bros. family opera seemed to be having its perennial doubts about the future and then difficulties with its advance.

There was less strength in the elephant and hippo departments, probably even fewer horses than these horse operas have had in recent seasons. There were fewer shows with live bands and continual drop-outs for such traditional features as the after-show, real cookhouse,

The King show was painted white for the first time, by Roger Boyd and made a great flash on the lot. Owensboro, Ky. on May 7. Mel Olsen Photo.

specs, liberty horse and high school acts. The separation of side show and menagerie was virtually a bygone thing; everyone combined them into a single tent. Billers found their work more difficult. The proportion between indoor and outdoor circuses was about the same, and while the indoor shows seemed to be making money in most cases, a two- or three-year revolutionary change in line-up of sponsors continued. Some of the old indoor leaders were gone and some new ones were strong. The pace seemed great for sponsors to drop a show they'd had for years in favor of a different title.

The year got started with Gil Gray's Circus wagons appearing in the Cotton Bowl parade at Dallas. Emanuel Zaccini was with Atayde in Mexico City and Bertram Mills reflected world-wide troubles for shows when it was sold by the Mills family to Maxwell Joseph of London. The Christmas units of such promoters as Barney Rapp and Jim Hetzer were in business. Con Colleano, Orrin Davenport and Charles Siegrist were named to the Hall of Fame about the time Ringling-Barnum opened its 96th tour January 15-16 at Venice quarters arena. While Davenport was being named to the Hall of Fame, Al Dobritch was winning contracts from such old Davenport standbys as Detroit and Cleveland. Bill Griffith stayed home to be agent a la King for the Birnam Bros. Circus he sold to Louis McNeece and Richard Johnson; that involved an 80 with three 30s and two bulls.

Charles Beers faced eyesight problems and didn't want to go out, but Roger Barnes was eager to troupe. Once they reported Barnes had bought out Beers, but in the end they went out together as usual. By season's end there was convincing talk that this had, indeed, been their last.

Probably the biggest spot news story within the business was the emergence of Art Concello and his subsequent withdrawal. The association he made with Frank McCloskey and associates in December was revealed in February. McCloskey, Concello and Jerry Collins owned the Clyde Beatty & Cole Bros. Circus. The first two owned King Bros., having bought out Bob Snowden and installed James M. Cole as manager. Together with Bill English they held the Sells & Gray Circus, too. There was speculation as to what changes Concello would make on the Beatty show, and new seat wagons were the first step. Concello staffers came on. Then there was word that Jimmy Ringling had been hired by Concello and his newfound partners to book an indoor route.

Arnold Maley succeeded Theo Forstall in the Beatty-Cole wagon as an indirect result of Concello's coming on.

Polack Bros. opened January 16 at Flint, Mich., the show's 23rd season. Sam Ward was assigned to promote Chicago for Polack. Hamid-Morton played Utica, Miami, Chicago and an old standby, the Kansas City Police date. M & M Circus, for Grace McIntosh and Chuck Marine, played remnants of the Davenport route, including Rochester. Hubert Castle, grown to a real power in the indoor circus category, played the ex-Davenport Grand Rapids, the ex-Hamid Memphis and the ex-Polack Fort Wayne. At Memphis his 100-foot backyard tent had a blowdown and animals had to be transferred to their trucks.

March brought out the Kelly-Miller changes. Sure enough, Joe McMahon had bought the back end—the performance—while D. R. Miller held the front end—concessions, side show, pits, etc. That meant the end of the long-time Kelly-Miller association with Ione Stevens; she picked up and moved to Von Bros.

Kelly-Miller had Daviso Cristiani as equestrian director and Paul Pyle as superintendent. Wardrobe came from the Mobile Mardi Gras. Actually, the break-

A small show that played the east coast was Fleet Bros. The pony sweep and side show is shown at Peapack, N.J. on May 21. Mel Olsen Photo.





Although the Hunt Show was called "Circus Hunt" the trucks were not relettered from the season two years before. This is the concession truck. Mel Olsen Photo.



The Hoxie Bros. Circus was well flashed in 1966 as illustrated by the water wagon and bally truck. Taken in Cleves, Ohio on June 6. Mel Olsen Photo.

out of equipment was more complicated than first noted; Joe owned the top while Dory owned the poles and ring curbs. The former owned eight and the latter owned six of the trucks; each gassed some of the trucks and apparently not necessarily those he owned. Season-long reports had it that McMahon was keeping up with the payments okay. The show had opened March 11 in Campo, Texas.

Ken Jensen Circus opened in March at Klamath Falls, Ore., soon after the owner's daughter, chimp trainer Thelma Craig, had died unexpectedly. Clyde Bros. had the Tampa Shrine. Carson & Barnes Circus opened out of El Centro, Calif. in March to play the old Barnes route.

By April things were well underway. Sells & Gray opened April 11 in Florida and carried such names as Superintendent Paul Hudon, John Cloutman, press and agent; Doc Bartok, advance; Bert Dearo, doors, and Jackie Wilcox, billing. Henry Vonderheid brought Von Bros. out April 23, using 14 trucks to play auspices from Massachusetts to Virginia. Charles Roark had the side show.

Herb Walters had sold Clark & Walters to Gus Bell, who took it out of Hugo on five trucks. Walters came along with the side show and pit, pony sweep and novelties. Back East, Harry Hunt stressed European format when he reopened Hunt Bros. Circus as Circus Hunt, a one-ring version, after a hiatus of two seasons. Lady Bird caught Ringling. Clayton Behee was the advance for DeWayne Bros. in California, using a 70 with two or some times three middles.

Carson & Barnes was going well with six bulls, 10 lions, 14 horses and ponies, and a hippo. It succeeded with 6 p.m. matinees while schools continued. Radio star Sky King was featured again.

Mills Bros. opened with an annual

party at Jefferson, O., April 23. For this 27th tour, the roster included Felix Brazon, Paul Nelson, and H. W. Ahrhart. This show stood out as among the last stands of such traditions as a strong band, Wild West concert, spec. high school and liberty acts.

May Wirth partnered with Karl Walenda to operate the datés formerly held by her last husband, Frank Wirth, in the East. King Bros. opened in the South. Hamid-Morton was up in St. Paul. Ringling-Barnum had 24 cars, 18 bulls, 11 tigers and 9 lions; John Ringling North reportedly took out Irish citizenship.

Fred Logan had the cats and bulls on Kelly Miller. Johnny Golden worked five lions for Sells and Gray. David Hoover filled the trainer post on Beatty-Cole, where other performers included Trevor Bale, Lucio (Franconi) Cristiani, Rex Williams with 3-5-3 bulls and the Flying Gaonas. Old timers like Milt Robbins, the Zoppes and Bumpy Anthony were on Hoxie Bros., starting March 26 out of Naples, Fla. Robbins had been sparring with Jack Smith and others about ownership of the Robbins Bros. title, but Smith would go out with it anyway.

Pete Cristiani offered Bob Couls the post of manager on the Cristiani Bros. Circus, held earlier by Joe McMahon, but the new connection never developed.

Next, his attention turned to Hoxie Tucker with an offer to combine, but that never took either. Cristiani Bros. talked about Harry Dawn and 9 lions, the Petross liberty act 2nd, Dick Shipley with five bulls, but soon Cristiani was combined with Von.

This was a strange link-up in which Pete Cristiani had a contracted route but couldn't play it; Von had a show that needed a stronger route. So the merger. As of Wilmington, N.C., they had an 80 with a 40 and two 30s, two Von and three Cristiani bulls, a band of 7, Pete as manager-superintendent and Henry as general manager. Dee Aldrich had the side show.

Beatty-Cole played Philadelphia with the Amusements of America for the Shrine, May 5-16.

It had a \$96,000 advance at Philadelphia. The show played two major Shrine clubs as well as the parent temple there. At Indianapolis the circus had a \$26,000 advance.

Kids were arrested after they shot BBs at Baudy's tigers on the Castle show at Indianapolis. Gatti - Charles Circus



The Cole Beatty Circus cookhouse is shown here during the Philadelphia stand on May 15. Mel Olsen Photo.



opened as a new one in Phoenix and sported familiar names like Chester Cable, Johnny Cline and Tommy Bently. Fleet Bros. appeared on 5 trucks and under a 60 with two 30s. L. R. McNeece bought Dick Johnson's share of Birnam Bros., and Rudy Jacobi sold Rudy Bros. to his wife, Elfi, who planned to open a European show called "Hagenbeck with Rudy Bros. USA." Tony Diano bought two bulls, giving him five for Shrine dates. Hoxie Bros. was in Tennessee and Carson & Barnes was in Montana as parts of the 17 circuses publishing routes.

Beatty-Cole had good business in the first weeks; it was staying east of Pennsylvania until July, an abnormally late routing. It would then go to the Middle West until September and make a fast drop to New Orleans. Concello was on the show all of the time as the tour got underway.

Kelly-Miller's 14 trucks included two seat wagons, a spool, a marquee wagon, plus a truck still lettered for Clark & Walters. There were six performing bulls and a seventh that didn't work and was for sale. K-M suffered through six weeks of rain in the early season. It was using a squeeze box, candy pitch and concert.

Miller had sold off his percentage of the Carson & Barnes Circus during the 1965-66 winter and for the 1966 summer he had a big part of the money in Aqualand, a marine show managed by Bob

Couls and moving on five trucks, two of them displaying fish. There was a whale from the West Coast show world. Miller sent on supplies of birds, fish and other displays. The show played shopping centers and elsewhere under auspices but was getting no money.

The Clyde Bros. unit coming out of the South had an 8-cat act, bears, chimps, bulls, high wire and flying; a second unit played Canada until they were combined in June. Turner Bros. was trouping in California. Clark & Walters found Wisconsin weak for business. Fleet Bros. was in New Jersey. James Bros. was in England for a TV stint. Big John Strong was in action out West.

Jack Smith had been struggling for months with his Robbins Bros. A Sarasota date had been promoted so it had to be played in April. But the show shut down again until May. Then Smith, along with Paul and Belmonte Cristiani, headed north. There were reports that it was donated a stretch of route that Pete Cristiani had set for his show and couldn't make. Robbins was shorthanded but did some business. Then Smith turned up ill and had to go home. Paul Cristiani

The Von Bros. title had a Cristiani-Wallace title pasted over it during the early part of the season. The concession truck and office trailer are shown here at Coatesville, Pa. on May 26. Mel Olsen Photo.



continued the show; however, efforts to route it into towns on the large size were not good and soon they found King and Mills in most of them anyway. Smith lost track of his own show for a while, but it didn't make too much difference because it soon folded.

Mills Bros. was host to the CFA at Cincinnati, June 23-25. The show came on to Chicago, its annual turnaround spot, and then went eastward. Ringling-Barnum added six high acts for the Astrodome date at Houston, where business was good, but not so good as last year's gigantic date there.

Hunt played Lighthouse Field at Philadelphia with Strates in May under a 100 with one 50 and with one ring. Marvin Case managed the 8 truck show and Harry Hunt was rarely there. It trouped four elephants and a seat wagon. Emmett Kelly completed his 5th annual engagement at Harrah's Club in Reno, this one for 19 weeks. Beatty-Cole's band numbered ten.

The Von-Cristiani deal ended June 25, when Von went one way and Cristiani went back the other, to Florida. From April to June the combine had used 16 trucks and long-side grandstand chairs with blues on the ends and short side.

King Bros. had nine trucks and a trailer, an 80 with three 40s, chairs and blues, recorded music, a 60 with two 30s for a side show with metal banners, cookhouse and two bulls.

Mills had all new canvas as usual and a band of seven.

Kelly-Miller was using up-to-the-minute quartz lights but had on the midway old time ball game and jewelry joints.

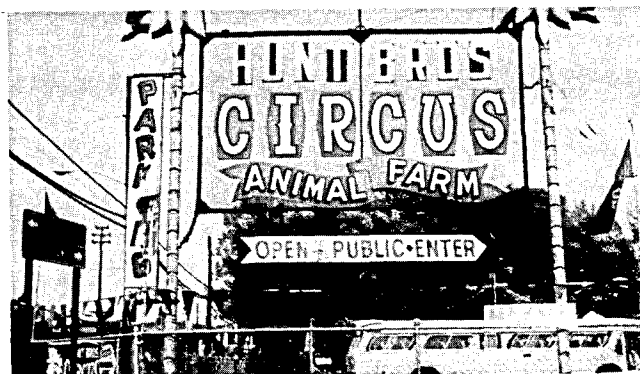
Hoxie Bros. had ten trucks, a new 60 with two 40s and a 30, three wooden ring curbs, planks and blues, a seven-cage semi, 2 bulls, Tom Kennedy and Joe Smiga. The tractors were new. The top was lost in early storms and they sidewalled for a while.

Sells & Gray used ten trucks, canned music, an 80 with a 40 and two 30s, numbered chairs and blues, a 60 and two 30s side show, two bulls, a cage semi, metal banners and no hippo.

James Bros., operated by Sid J. Kellner, had Barbettes line of 12 girls in



The back of a side show banner line truck of the Sells & Gray Circus is shown at Berkeley Heights, N.J. on May 17. Mel Olsen Photo.



The entrance to the Hunt Circus Animal Farm at Burlington, N.J. Note the Hunt paper on fence at left. Mel Olsen Photo.

aerial numbers, to mark the aerial director's return to the field after several seasons' absence.

Clark and Walters couldn't make it and took its three bulls, planks and blues, 70 with three 30s and eight trucks all back to Hugo, August 4, ending a 16-week losing tour.

At mid-summer, Ringling-Barnum cancelled El Paso under Shrine Circus pressure, Hamid-Morton acts made the big Circus Parade date at Milwaukee, Kelly-Miller bulls ran loose in Chicago suburbs, Carson & Barnes went into Western Canada, Tom Packs Circus showed St. Louisians a balloon ascension and Birnam toured Washington state. Floyd King and Dory Miller were among those watching the Milwaukee circus train and parade. Fleet Bros. was called Rocket Bros. for nine weeks it played a Centerville, Md., spot owned by David Wharton. New York state hassled over a safety net law and in Illinois there was tightening of enforcement of the charity and phones regulations.

Beers-Barnes opened its 33rd season in North Carolina territory. By mid-summer its six semis, 80 and two 30s and an ex-Hunt seat wagon were in Pennsylvania. On hand were Charles Beers, Roger Barnes, Harold Barnes and Bob Grubbs.

Friction had been building among the Beatty-Cole brass. As comes to any trio, this was two to one. First, Collins and Concello sided against McCloskey, but then in the show-down it was Collins and McCloskey against Concello. At issue was whether they would take their principal unit indoors. An Indianapolis meeting decided in favor of tenting in 1967. Orders for the new canvas had not been placed because of the indoor plan, so now the tent order went in. There was question as to whether it would be built in time to make the usual late fall delivery so it would be available for the New Orleans date. At Toledo, the Concello people on the show departed, leaving it back in the hands of McCloskey's staffers. Almost at once the hue and cry

came up to bring back Frank Orman.

Ringling Barnum's played to great business in Southern California. It got \$560,000 at Los Angeles, then \$140,000 at Long Beach. Earlier it had done well at Dallas, played Oklahoma City for July 4 and pulled 100,000 customers to Houston's Astrodome, where 167,000 had seen it a year earlier.

Sells & Gray left Canada and said the eight weeks were the best of its four yearly Canadian stints. September found both Hunt Bros. and Beers-Barnes offered for sale. A book about the Cristianis was published. Carson & Barnes reached Oklahoma after a successful tour of Western Canada, but it dropped some of the money getting home to Hugo. Featured radio star, Sky King, signed to make the first half of the 1967 season with Jack Moore's outfit, after which Moore's rocket feature will come on.

Ringling's Chicago business was the best in several years, due largely to a switch from spring to fall dates. There were several sell-outs in the International Amphitheater. Another Chicago event was the integration of the chambermaid's frolic; four Negro girls were added to the roster of aerial ballet. Ringling people noted with interest that Michael Burke, the 1956 R-B manager, was named president of the New York Yankees.

Pat Anthony played Hawaii for E. K. Fernandez. The Hanneford Family Circus appeared at several fairs and parks. Madison Square Garden revealed it would bring in a Moscow circus and send a U.S. circus to Russia, the latter under Art Concello's management. The Beatty-Cole business in New Orleans was good. James Bros. sloughed its Chicago boiler room and stand because of a charity law's application. Gil Gray spread a new 110 with three 40s for the free circus at the State Fair of Texas; Gray sold some elephants and leopards in Mexico and Franco Richards was delivering them.

Bob Couls shuttered the whale show in October and Ted Bowman took it out again later, just as the folded Clark & Walters Circus revived to field a shopping center unit. Louis McNeese folded Birnam Bros. in Nevada and took it to San Antonio.

Kelly-Miller got in behind the Beatty-Cole show on part of its late route and

died, but then K-M squeezed Sells & Gray out of territory where circuses can't play within 30 days of a fair. So Sells & Gray closed September 28. Beatty closed November 6 at St. Petersburg and went to Deland quarters with its 32 trucks, 11 bulls and eight seat wagons. King closed October 18 at Sebring, Fla., and at the first of the winter the three Corporation shows—Beatty, Sells-Gray and King—were barned together. In the final weeks, Frank Orman was back on Beatty.

Ringling closed at Birmingham, November 17-20 and claimed its best season out of all 96. Polack closed November 25-26 at Chattanooga, Clyde Bros. November 6. L. N. Fleckles won the St. Louis Polcie Circus contract. Hubert Castle's home burned in Dallas. Al Dobritch won the Kansas City Shrine and Los Angeles dates for 1967. H. W. Ahrhart and Merle Johnson announced they had closed with Mills Bros.

As the year closed it was confirmed that Doc Bartok had bought Hunt Bros. Circus and that Concello was signing acts for the Moscow appearances. Joe McMahon bought two used tops from Hunt Bros.; it looked like he would drop February-in-Florida plans and open again in South Texas. Changes were rumored for King Bros. Circus.

Deaths during the year included Ben Davenport, Mrs. Howard Suesz, Guy Schmuck, Paul Eagles, Jerome Leahy, Arthur Konyot, Win Danielson, Arthur (Bum) Henry, Etta Tybell Hodgini, Arthur Heritage, Duke Kamaku, Fred Gregg, Jean Allen, Thelma Craig, Lou Kish, Tom Huftle, Dennie Helms, Mrs. Roland Butler, Neil Burk, Pat Purcell, Vernon L. McReavy, Mrs. Henry Ringling, Henry Stephenson, Harry Lind, Mrs. Arnold Maley, Harry Pickard, Karl Cartwright, George Churchill, Don C. Hayman, Tom Woodward, Roscoe Armstrong, Stella Wirth St. Leon, Harry Kackley, Albert Powell, Bill Backell, E. D. Landers, Mrs. Frank Orman, Emile Winters, William Carl Schultz, Carl (China) Durbin, Mrs. William Linder-mann Guenther, Francisco Lentini, Billy Smart, Dick Lewis and Howard Y. Bary.

The Rhoda Royal Elephants

By HOMER C. WALTON

Rhoda Royal spent most of his 74 years on the road with different Circuses and was a great horse trainer and equestrian director and for short periods was a circus owner.

During these years he had at one time or another 9 different elephants. These included Billy Sunday, Victor, Helen, Muggins, Tiny May, Carrie, Chin Chin and Rhoda.

Rhoda Royal had indoor circuses as far back as the winter of 1907-08. He also had circus acts in vaudeville at theaters. Some of his bulls ended up on some of these tours dead.

In the December 16, 1916 issue of *Billboard* there was a Christmas and New Year greeting showing two small elephants and a woman trainer and reading, "Miss Dolly Castel Presenting Rhoda Royal elephants, featured attraction for fairs now playing vaudeville."

Rhoda Royal had a one-ring circus playing theaters in 1918, with a performance lasting one hour and one-half. This had two elephants, Tiny May and Muggins was in an act with Buster the pony, under Prof. Wm. Hays. Royal also had four small bulls leased to the Coop and Lent's Circus in 1918.

The Rhoda Royal Railroad Circus of 1920 was the first circus the writer watched unload at a railroad siding. This was the first circus Bill Woodcock trouped with.

The 1920 Royal show had four bulls, Muggins, a big tuskless male, a smaller male tuskless named Victor, and a female about the same size named Helen. There was also a female punk named Carrie.

In parade Muggins was hitched in shaves pulling a cage containing a llama

and ema. Carrie was quite young and small then but had a harness on and seemed to accompany Muggins more for the experience. Victor and Helen were hitched to the unafon wagon.

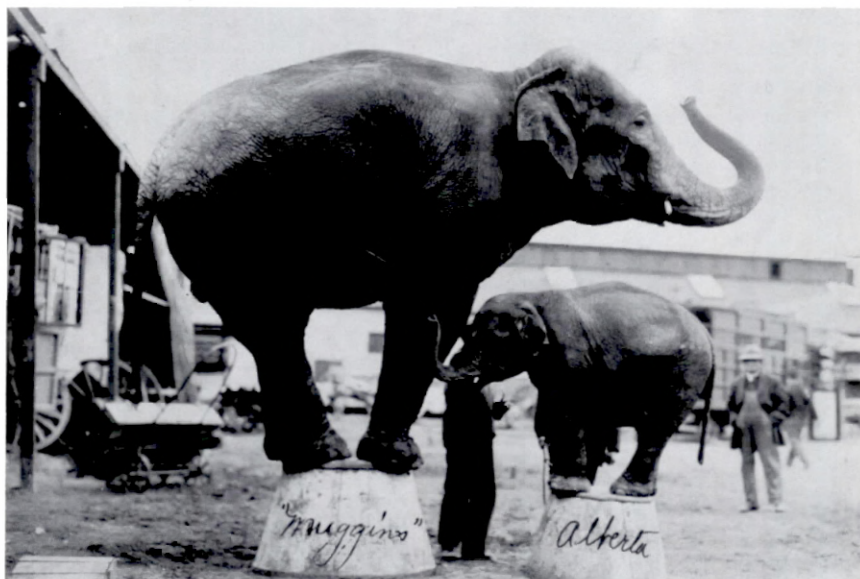
Bill Woodcock once told the writer he did not know who broke Muggins, Victor and Helen, but they were "dandies." He said all the Rhoda Royal elephants were well trained. Young Carrie was one of the first bulls Bill ever worked. Carrie was only partially trained when the writer first saw her in 1920 and she did not work in the ring.

Victor and Helen were leased out on theater dates after the close of the Rhoda Royal Circus early in 1922 and they died of exposure soon after. Muggins suffered the same fate in 1926 while leased to Bob Morton Circus and died from riding in a drafty baggage car.

Two of the better known of the Rhoda Royal bulls were Billy Sunday and Carrie. Billy Sunday started in show business from the Wm. P. Hall Farm in 1910. At that time he was purchased from Hall by A. M. Cauble for his wagon show titled Cauble's Combined Shows.

Cauble (an old "Pen Pal" of the writer) said he named the punk Baby Bill for his friend Wm. P. (Bill) Hall and he said Baby Bill got his first solid food after going to his show. But they ran into cold weather and it was feared the baby would freeze to death and they bundled him up good and took him back to Lancaster, Mo. and the Hall Farm.

Muggins is shown here in the Sells-Floto winter quarters, in Denver, Colorado, around 1917. Eddie Jackson photo now in Pfening Collection.



(See A. M. Cauble's Wagon Show in January-February 1962 issue of *Bandwagon*.)

The following year the young elephant was a pit show attraction on The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. Anyway Hall got him back and Rhoda Royal purchased him from Hall. Bill Woodcock said Hall once told him that Royal bought all 9 bulls from him. It is not known what year Rhoda Royal got him, but he had him on Sells-Floto Circus as far back as 1918, and he was known as Billy Sunday by then. It is assumed by the writer that Rhoda Royal was the one who named him for the well-known evangelist of that period.

Billy Sunday was a tuskless but never did grow to be real big, he was sort of a dwarf and was slightly deformed. He worked in vaudeville with a pony and a dog, called the Billy Sunday Comedy Circus. Rhoda Royal finally sold him to the Sells-Floto Circus.

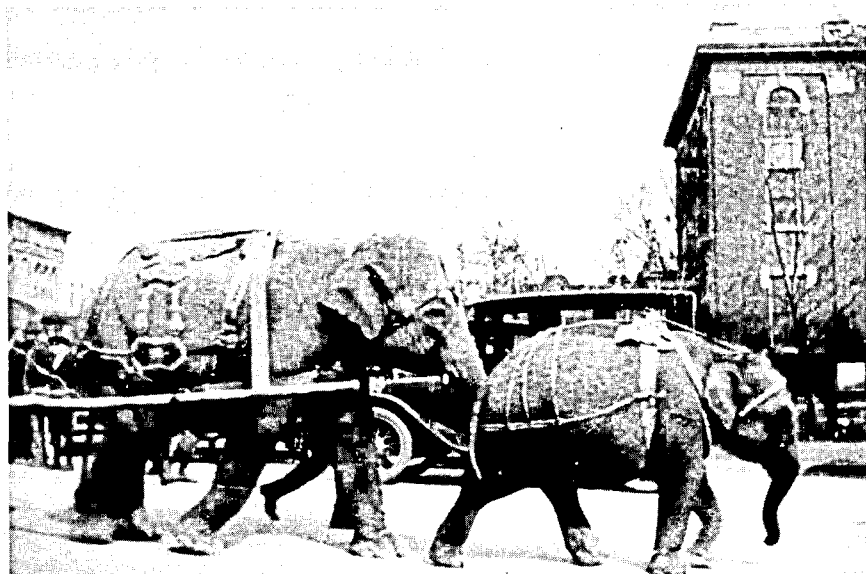
Eddie Allen (a well-known bull man) said Billy Sunday was the only elephant to "sapp" him (curling up their trunk and letting you have it hard). Billy Sunday made big news on the Sells-Floto Circus when he broke loose with some other bulls and were on a rampage for about 14 hours and were finally rounded up and the big bull, Floto, was shot.

Billy Sunday remained with the Sells-Floto Circus until he was sold during the winter of 1924-25 to the Linderman Brothers for their Seils-Sterling Circus. He was the first bull on that show and was later joined by Lucy, and these two bulls remained with that show until it went off the road in 1938.

The Seils-Sterling Circus was sold at auction in Illinois and Billy Sunday and Lucy were sold to a man in Chicago. Billy ended up at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Los Angeles, California, where he was executed in 1940.

Carrie was the last surviving elephant owned by Rhoda Royal and was acquired by him when she was very young and small and was named for his wife, Carrie Royal. Royal had her on Jesse Willard and Buffalo Bill Circus in 1917. Then in 1918 she was leased with three other small bulls to the Coop and Lent's Circus. Then from 1920 to 1922 she was on The Rhoda Royal Circus. Then she was sold to Andrew Downie in 1922 for his Walter L. Main Circus, which was the second circus the writer saw her on in 1923.

The Downie herd in 1923 consisted of six bulls. Besides Carrie, at that time was a large punk were three full grown bulls, Old Babe, Clyde and Louie, and there were two small punks, Joe and Jean. Old Babe (not to be confused with Gentry or Cross Country Babe now with Gene Holter Shows). This Babe with Downie started about 1902-03 with Sells & Downs Circus and was on many others and died



Carrie walking in front of Muggins pulling a cage in the parade of the 1920 Rhoda Royal Circus. Author's Collection.

at the Paul Kelly quarters in Peru, Ind. in 1957.

Louie was on Golmar Bros. Circus in 1917 and went to the Houston, Texas, Zoo after the close of the King Bros. show in 1957. Clyde was a big female with a male name and was bought from Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. She was not with Downie long as she was sold to Rudy Mueller who had an elephant act and she died while with Mueller.

Joe was later executed on the Cole Bros. Circus in 1943 and Jean went to the Atlanta Zoo after the close of the King Show in 1957.

Bill Emery, one of the old timers and a really great elephant trainer, put the routine together during the winter of 1922-23. During the season of 1923 Jack Davis worked Babe and Louie in one ring and Carrie Joe and Jean were worked in one end ring.

On the Main Show Carrie was advertised as "Royal Carrie, the only elephant in the world dancing the one-step and shimmy." It can also be remembered that Carrie walked around the ring on her hind legs.

After the close of the Walter L. Main Circus in 1924 Carrie was on the 101 Ranch Show from 1925 to 1931. During 1932-33 she remained at the 101 Quarters and worked special dates. In 1934 she was with Barnett Bros. Circus. Then in 1935 she went to the Cole Bros. Circus where she remained during the life of that show. She was then on King Bros. from 1952 to 1957.

Then when the King show went to

Billy Sunday with LeRoy Schroder and wife Nellie in the backyard of the 1936 Seils-Sterling show. Author's Collection.

pieces on the road and they were leaving animals and equipment along their route as they went, Carrie and another Cole show bull, Louie, went to the Miller Bros. Fort Weare Game Farm at Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, when the King show was on its way north.

The Millers first thought they had Jean with Carrie but it was later learned that they had Louie instead. It was caused by a mix-up by some of the bull men who did not know better. Jean went to the zoo in Atlanta, Ga. and the Millers sold Louie to the Shriners in Houston, Texas, who keep her at the zoo there.

Mrs. M. A. Miller told the writer that the bulls were in poor condition when going there but with good care and feeding they were soon in good shape again. Mrs. Miller said Carrie was as gentle as a kitten and they work her in the park during the season where children and adults alike have their photos taken on

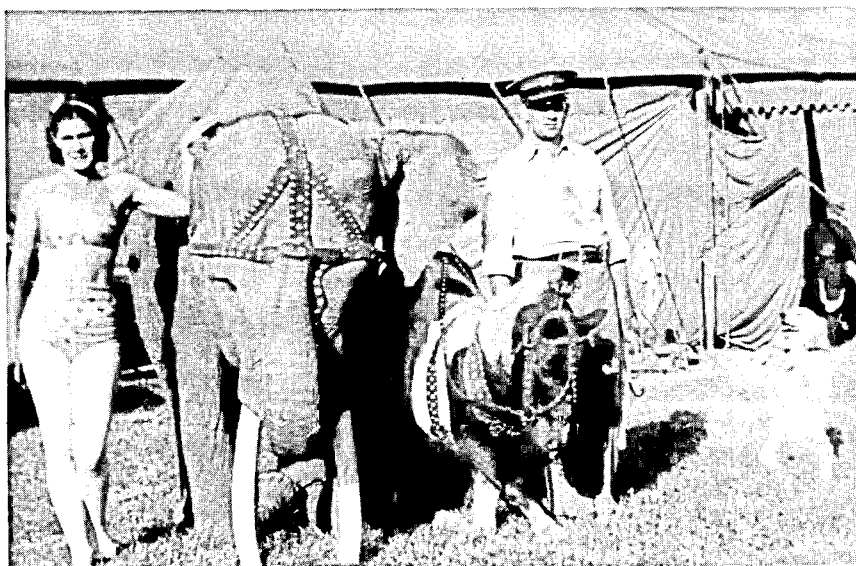


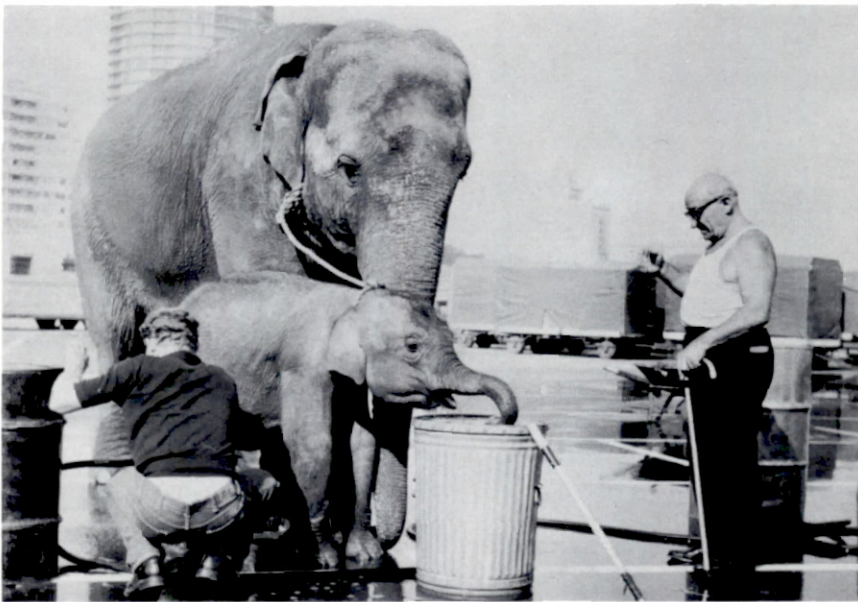
Homer Walton first saw Carrie on the Royal show in 1920. He is shown on her here in 1955 on King Bros. Burt Pettus is on left. Author's Collection.

her. They did not know her routine when she went to the park but Mr. Miller, who used to work elephants in circuses, just took her into the ring and Carrie showed him what she did. Mrs. Miller said the only thing Carrie would not have anything to do with trucks anymore, as she liked her home and did not want to leave. They loved her there and said they did not want to part with her.

When the other bulls there are out on shopping center tours, Carrie just spends her spare time eating and watching the rest of the world go by, while she enjoys the Tennessee sunshine.

(The late Wm. (Bill) Woodcock furnished much of the information for this article.)





Hugo's Youngest Trouper

By HARRY QUILLEN

The menagerie tent is up. Lions and tigers are washed in two lines of cages, and jeeps pull them to their tent in the rear.

Twelve water barrels are running over, on the new concrete back yard of the sports arena. Hugo Schmitt, Sup't. of elephants of the Ringling Bros. and B-B Circus, is talking to the driver of a hay truck. There are 40 bales of hay, 30 of straw, and bags of grain.

A small pick-up truck passes slowly from the American Air Lines to the end of the lot. The cargo, a small teakwood crate from India.

"That's it," said Hugo, pulling down the tip of his new straw hat. He is all smiles as he walks briskly with his white cane towards the small teakwood crate.

"Let's get it off," growled the driver. "I'm tired. I've been trying all night to get this elephant to your show. All kinds of trouble at the airport; immigration, quarantine and all kinds of red tape."

"After they got the crate on the plane and out a ways from Honolulu, there was engine trouble. Back went the baby in his crate. More red tape and paper work, but here we are," smiled the driver.

Hugo motioned to Congo, the chief electrician and to Dummy Ass't. on props. They slid the crate to the ground. Hugo opened the foot wide window and played with the baby's trunk, giving him pieces of ripe bananas from a bag on the crate. He owns the elephant.

Hundreds of questions from the towners.

"Ten months old, 200 pounds, thirty-eight inches high," were quick replies

from Hugo. He looked at his watch with a frown. More bananas, then lays out a rope and chain with snaps across the crate. This is for big Targa, his elephant he brought from Germany twenty years ago. She is down at the train.

"Where did he come from," asked a teenager.

"Thailand to India, then to Honolulu. He stands most of the way. They can sleep that way. They like sugar cane," replied Hugo.

"Here they come," points a youngster, who has just wrapped up a riding act horse shoe, with her mother's tissue paper. She says, "This 'pony' shoe is good luck."

Axel, the first Ass't., is leading eighteen bulls behind the water barrels, after a hot walk through city traffic. They drink, splash and play with the water while they are washed with a hose. Then they are led to the shady side of the menagerie tent, staked and chained in a picket line.

Big Targa is brought over to the crate, where a chain is placed around her neck. Hugo holds the end of a knotted rope and opens the back board a few inches. Helpers open half way. His head and shoulder is part way in the box. Out again he slams his straw on top of the crate. All the back is off the crate.

Hugo's arm is in again. The baby makes a quick turn to run, he blocks him with his legs. He turns and has the rope around the baby's neck.

"Take and walk him," Hugo instructed his Ass't. Around, around Targa walked in a big circle, with the baby running by her side. He is led over to the picket line

Long Beach, Calif. — Hugo Schmitt watches his first assistant wash and give the baby her first drink. Harry Quillen Photo.

and chained to Targa. Pasha, the zebra, had her head over the kicking board and "Window," the big black watch dog, barked at the crowd.

Hugo came out of the wardrobe wagon and sprinkled sugar and bits of banana under the baby's hay. He tried to nurse big Targa — she pulled away.

Half of the elephants are back from the water barrels, and the front herd is on the way out, including Targa. The baby roars louder, then all the lions put together. It's his trumpet of the day. He has lost Targa.

Hugo is out of his wagon after a short nap. He loosens the rope and chain and all three take a walk. At the water barrel he is given his first drink. Axel scrubs him as Hugo looks on.

Back at the tent he was given the name John.

Big Targa is now staked between three babies, one boy and two girl elephants. They talk things over with their trunks.

The wardrobe lady had a red and gold blanket ready for the baby, so John made Spec that night tied to Targa, around the long rubber mat track.

At midnight the lights were turned off; only the sound of ocean waves slapping the shore behind the menagerie tent. Baby John laid down after his long plane trip, well protected by Targa.

"Did she sleep?" said the night watchman. "It was deep and long. He wiggled his legs a lot — I guess it was dreams. He kept his trunk in his mouth most of the night."

NEW WOODCOCK ELEPHANT



A new addition to the herd on the Polack Bros. Circus is this young African elephant. William "Buckles" Woodcock, Jr. is breaking the baby to work in the act with the show this season. Buckles has named her "Kenya."

Short Sketches of Former Shows

Season of 1936

By JOSEPH T. BRADBURY

Bockus & Kilonis Wild Animal Circus

Speaking in retrospect some years ago one of the owners humorously declared that Bockus & Kilonis was the world's worst circus title, the name sounding more like that of a sausage company than a circus. The medium sized motorized circus using this unlikely title lasted only 6 weeks during a New England tour in the spring of 1936. Cold and wet weather accompanied by unprofitable business quickly killed off the new show in its first and only season but whether or not a better title such as "somebody's brothers" could have saved the show might be debatable.

The Bockus & Kilonis Wild Animal Circus was one of the many small and medium motorized circuses to go out in the mid 1930's in which showmen from many fields of outdoor showbusiness got into the circus game in an attempt to gather in their share of the loot which the American public was finally beginning to spend on amusements due to easing of the great depression which had gripped the nation for several years.

The show was organized by Curtis L. Bockus and John D. Kilonis at Manchester, N.H. in the spring of 1936. Both owners lived in Manchester and were quite similar in background and many ways although associates who knew them both well say they had quite different personalities. Both Bockus and Kilonis were of Greek ancestry and like several

other prominent showmen of the day had once been wrestlers. In fact Kilonis was quite well known as a wrestler. Although his nickname was "Gentle John" he claimed to have been the first "bad guy" in the ring and was featured in numerous matches in the Boston Garden. At one time he was proclaimed as one of many "champions of the world." Kilonis still wrestled some during the off season.

Likewise both Bockus and Kilonis' past experience in showbusiness had primarily been with carnivals. Bockus had operated a one baggage car gilly type carnival and at one time had owned a ten car show. In 1935 he had operated the Curtis L. Bockus Circus Shows which played a permanent type stand during the summer at Woonsocket, R.I. In addition to having regular carnival rides and attractions this show also had 6 free circus acts, one of them being Ben Beno, "the man on the chair in the air."

John D. Kilonis also had been primarily connected with carnivals having owned various joints and rides and at one time had operated a medium sized motorized carnival. While Bockus had usually been with railroad shows, mostly gilly type, Kilonis' experience had been with motorized outfits.

In the spring of 1936 these two former carnival showmen decided to join forces and frame a motorized circus which would take to the road that season. It was

a partnership arrangement but the exact percentage of each man is not known but is assumed to have been equal.

Quarters for the new show was established at Crystal Lake Park in Manchester, N.H. and work on the framing of the show began in March. The *Billboard* kept the show world quite well informed on the progress being made.

A near disaster was averted right at the beginning when heavy floods destroyed the Manchester Zoo nearby demolishing all buildings and killing more than 100 animals. The water came close but did not reach the circus quarters but did do considerable damage to roads in the vicinity.

The April 4 *Billboard* reported that the show had received 10 new Ford V-8 trucks equipped with 24 ft. semi trailers from the Charles Carrol Co. and later reports stated that 7 additional new trucks were delivered. A total of 26 trucks plus 3 advance vehicles were claimed by the show and this figure should be substantially correct.

An important personage connected with the new show was Capt. William Schultz who was signed to furnish several wild and domestic animal acts in the

Photo No. 2 — Bockus & Kilonis Circus side-show with brand new bannerline on lot at Manchester, N.H., April 30, 1936. Photo by Ken Amidon.



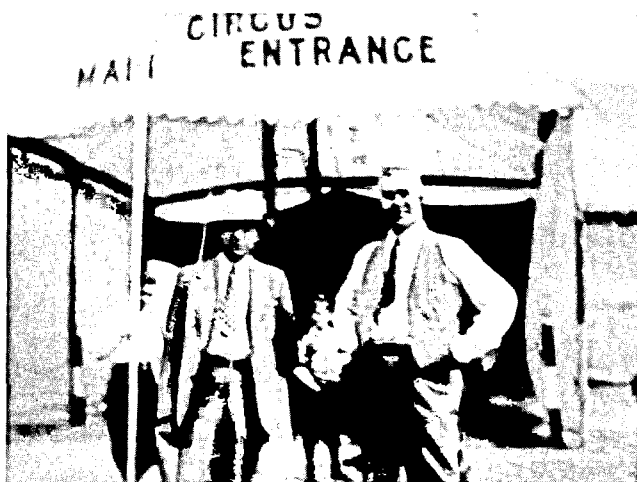


Photo No. 1—Marquee and big top of Bockus & Kilonis Wild Animal Circus on lot at opening stand in Manchester, N.H., April 30, 1936. Photo by Ken Amidon.

performance. Schultz also added a number of his own trucks which photos indicate were used not only to carry his own animals and props but also to load seats and other properties of the show. In the early 30's Schultz had operated his own circus using the rather unusual title of "King of the Beasts." His vehicles were still painted with that title while on the Bockus & Kilonis show. One of Schultz's animal acts was trained lions worked in the steel arena by Marion Knowlton who later gained fame on the Cole Bros. Circus. She also worked horses, dogs, and ponies. Schultz furnished the majority of stock and other animals on the show. Ted Merchant, who was named to head the wild west concert, also had 8 horses on the show.

Evidently there was no elephant carried by the show. None appear in photos and two separate accounts of the performance fail to mention any kind of

Photo No. 3—Curtis L. Bockus (with hat) and John D. Kilonis in front of marquee of their new circus on opening stand at Manchester, N.H., April 30, 1936. Photo by Ken Amidon.



elephant act. Likewise there were no caged animals other than Schultz's lions. No separate menagerie top was carried.

During the show's short life they never did get around to lettering the motorized equipment. A couple units did have the word "circus" painted on them but not the title. Photos indicate the color was dark, probably red. The light plant was rented from a New Jersey firm.

Seating consisting of both blues and grandstand, was delivered in mid-April and the show's canvas came a few days later. The big top was a 90 ft. round with one 40 and two 30 ft. middle pieces. The canvas was not new but was in good shape. Big top was fronted by a new marquee neatly titled with the show's initials. The sideshow top was a 90 ft. round with two 30's. It likewise was a used top. Cad Hill was given the contract to furnish ten new 10 x 14 sideshow banners and these gave a wonderful looking flash to the midway.

A cookhouse top was carried as well as several other minor tents.

J. H. "Doc" Oyler was manager of the sideshow and had a strong lineup of attractions which included Madame Rhonda, palmist; petrified man; Airlene; Guy Sampson, musical cowboy playing glasses, bottles, handsaw, mandolin, guitar, and novelty instruments; snake charmer; Punch and Judy; magic; legless

WESTERLY


FRIDAY, May 15

Afternoon and Evening
OAK HILL FARM
off Liberty Street

BOCKUS & KILONIS

WILD ANIMAL

CIRCUS



100 ANIMALS 100

25 CLOWNS

WORLD'S BEST
WILD ANIMAL
CIRCUS

20 ACRES
OF
TENTS

Admission Adults 50c Children 25c

[2:00 AND 8:00 P.M. DAILY]

Example of newspaper advertising of Bockus & Kilonis Circus, season of 1936. Circus Farm Collection.

man; dancers; and Bill Freeman's colored band and minstrels.

Al Massey was bandleader and had an excellent 9 piece big show band.

Although several motorized shows were still giving a daily street parade in 1936 Bockus & Kilonis did not have one.

The *Billboard* reported in mid-April that General Agent James Swafford had started on the road carrying a great line of newspaper material. The show also claimed to have a good line of paper.

Photo No. 4—Light plant truck of Bockus & Kilonis Circus, Fall River, Mass., May 21, 1936. This equipment was rented from a New Jersey firm. Photo by John Cutler.



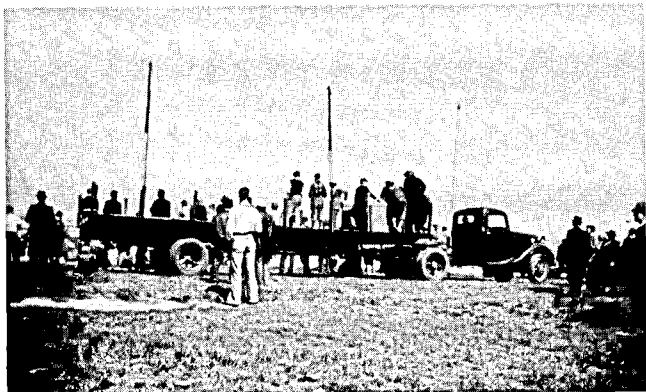


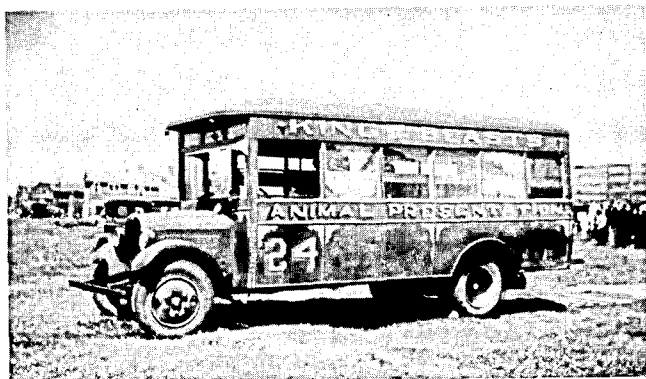
Photo No. 5—Semi with new Ford V-8 tractor used to haul poles and props on lot at Fall River, Mass., May 21, 1936. Photo by John Cutler.

Bockus and Kilonis lined up a staff of competent showmen, several having had considerable circus experience while others, like the two owners, had been mainly with carnivals. One such ex-carnie was F. Stanley Reed, who after the past three years in the carnival field signed on as legal adjuster.

The staff and key personnel not mentioned elsewhere in this article included the following: Ben R. Jones, secretary-treasurer; George Atkinson, press agent; George Manchester, superintendent; Frank Renfrow, boss canvasman; Cledys McLaughlin, ticket seller; Larry Kobler, steward, and Irish Dedee, in charge of front door. George L. Meyers was reported to have been signed as equestrian director but the *Billboard's* review of the opening performance said that Capt. Schultz was acting as ringmaster and running the performance. Meyers probably did not show.

Opening date of the new circus was April 30, 1936 in Manchester, N.H. under auspices of the Milk Fund Committee. Doc Olzendam, who was connected with this committee, handled the arrangements with the show. The show

Photo No. 7—Truck No. 24 used to carry Capt. William Schultz's animal acts and props. Note Schultz's lettering "King of Beasts." On lot at Fall River, Mass., May 21, 1936. Photo by John Cutler.



played 3 days in Manchester, April 30, May 1, and May 2.

According to the *Billboard* there were two good crowds on opening day. Acts listed in the performance included the Valeros brothers, aerial bars; Capt. William Schultz and his animal acts, featuring Marion Knowlton, who put horses, dogs, ponies, and lions thru their paces; Leo and Mae Jackson, bicycle turn; the LeVolos, wire act; the Harry Barrow company on trapeze; Marlow and Marlette, contortionists and trapeze performers; and Art Borello's clowns. Art was producing clown. Ted Merchant, western screen star, had the wild west concert using 8 head of stock. Concerts were given by Al Massey's band before each performance prior to playing for the big show program.

Other acts later mentioned as being with the show included Emma Raymond and Josie LaFrance with Miss Raymond doing a balancing trapeze act and her partner assisting and both doing a slack wire number.

The full route of the show has not turned up in any of the better known collections, however the *Billboard* route section listed a number of stands as did the Grace route collection, owned by Dick Conover. The show's tour, which lasted only six weeks, was confined to a rather limited area in New England. After the opening the show went south through Massachusetts into Connecticut and Rhode Island. Later it went back into Massachusetts and finally into Maine where it closed.

All shows suffered from the bad



Photo No. 6—Cookhouse truck and dining tent on lot at Fall River, Mass., May 21, 1936. Photo by John Cutler.

weather in New England in the spring of 1936 and the May 30 *Billboard* gave an example of what the new Bockus & Kilonis show had to contend with weatherwise at the Danielson, Conn. stand on May 13. The article had as the heading, "Bockus & Kilonis Show in Storm at Danielson," and read as follows:

"At Danielson, Conn. during a heavy rain and thunder storm one of the main center poles broke letting down the canvas at one end."

The article further described some of the happenings on the show in recent days: "At Norwich, Conn., May 14 there was a fair sized audience at matinee and capacity at night. There were also large crowds for the big show and sideshow at Westerly, R.I. on May 16. The big show, under C. L. Bockus (on front door) and Supt. Manchester, clicked. J. D. Kilonis is running the sideshow and making announcements in the big show. Capt. Schultz is ringmaster of the big show's program which includes his wild and domestic animal numbers (George Cleachett in charge of wild animals), bicycle, trapeze, horizontal bar, slack wire, aerial, menage, and other acts. Ted

Photo No. 8—Another of Capt. Schultz's trucks used by Bockus & Kilonis Circus. This one carried the "King of Beasts" title and used to transport seats and poles. On lot at Fall River, Mass., May 21, 1936. Photo by John Cutler.

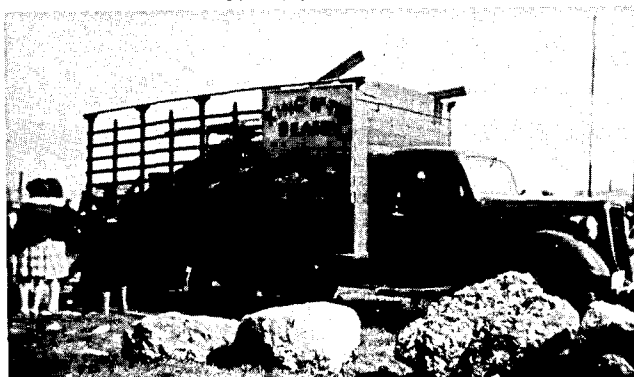




Photo No. 9 — Bockus & Kilonis Circus on lot at Fall River, Mass., May 21, 1936. Four pole big top is in foreground. Photo by John Cutler.

Merchant is in charge of a good wild west concert. Patty McDermott is tractor driver."

The show was at West Warwick, R.I. on May 17 and then was soon back in Massachusetts with stands May 21 at Fall River and May 22 at New Bedford. A couple other stands in Massachusetts were May 27 at Gloucester and May 28 at Haverhill.

The show entered Maine and was at Bridgeton on June 3 and Lewiston on the 4th.

Very little now appeared in the trade publications about the show but a sure sign that everything was not well was when the *Billboard* reported that George Atkinson, general press agent, had left the show and at Skowhegan, Maine, Ted Merchant, trick rider and roper and man in charge of the wild west concert, left with his troupe and stock.

Bad weather and bad business were fast ruining the show. Another new show trying it for the first time in 1936 and in New England was Maynard Bros. Circus,

which was considerably smaller than Bockus & Kilonis. The May 30 *Billboard* reported that Maynard Bros. had folded May 23 at Stonington, Conn. after being attached by performers and employees for three weeks back pay.

In those days New England always had a number of circuses and in the spring of 1936 the large motorized show, Downie Bros., was nearby at many stands as well as several other smaller shows. Bockus & Kilonis did get a bit of competition from other shows in the area however this was not the main factor for the show's failure. Some connected with the show say that internal and managerial problems also contributed to the show's downfall.

The show finally halted the night of June 12 at Millinocket, Maine, being unable to make a go of it any longer. The June 27 *Billboard* told of the show's closing and stated that the personnel had scattered with several acts joining the Eddy Bros. Circus (new title in 1936 for Hunt Bros.) which was nearby. A couple of the acts going with Eddy Bros. were Capt. Schultz and his trained animal contingent and Marlo and Marlette.

Messers. Bockus and Kilonis had ac-



Photo No. 10 — Horse trailer and one of Ted Merchant's wild west horses on lot at Fall River, Mass., May 21, 1936. Photo by John Cutler.

quired all the circus experience they wanted during the short six weeks their show was on the road and neither of them was ever connected in an official capacity with a circus again. Both returned to the carnival field and were connected in some capacity with carnies until retirement. Both are now dead. Kilonis died in 1965 and Bockus died some years earlier.

I am indebted to a number of individuals for aid in preparation of this article. Special thanks go to CHS Director Paul Horsman of the Circus Farm. Paul helped locate both photos and information about the show as well as providing the newspaper ads used for illustration. Others aiding in the cause were Al Shlink, Ken Amidon (photos), Doc Olzendam, Don Marcks, Dick Conover (route), and John Cutler (photos). With cooperation like this from CHS members and their friends there is no limit to where *Bandwagon* can go in recording for posterity the history of the American circus.

THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1967 CONVENTION

BARABOO, WIS.



BILLY SMART DIES

By Jack Niblett

Billy Smart is dead, and a multitude of people, including many thousands who never met him, but who had seen his genial image on television, feel the sadness of a personal loss and the knowledge that for them the world of entertainment will never be the same again.

Billy Smart was a master showman who looked the part. For England and much of Western Europe he personified "Mr. Circus," a large, friendly, extrovert personality, everybody's idea of just how a circus proprietor should look, and one who in a world of contracting circus business expanded his own show into the vastly profitable "World's Largest" entertainment.



"The Guv'nor," as Billy was affectionately known by his family and staff, collapsed and died on Sunday, September 25th. Traveling with the circus for the first time this season, (he had been busy all summer supervising the planning of a new zoo on an estate near the winter quarters at Windsor) Mr. Smart led the fifteen-elephant parade through the town of Ipswich to the circus ground where he entertained the crowds by conducting the band which played outside the circus zoo. (Circus performances are not allowed on Sundays in England, but the zoo is permitted to open). Then just like any other good Englishman he retired to his caravan for a cup of tea, with his wife. There he collapsed and died with many members of his large family around him. Mr. Smart was aged 73. A member of a big family himself, he was proud of his own large issue; he had been blessed with eleven children, twenty-eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

It seems hard to believe that Billy Smart's Circus only came into being in 1946. Mr. Smart was already a well-known showman at that time, but in a different calling, namely that of the traveling fair (carnival) business. Billy had come up the hard way; one of a

family of twenty-three children of a fair-ground stallholder he often knew hunger and hardship. The acquisition of a "Dodgem" car track started him on the road to the Big Top and to the top of his profession. Mr. Smart started his circus with the idea that here was something in which all his children could take part, a shrewd prediction which has been amply fulfilled.

The show was styled "Billy Smart's Road Show and New World Circus" and comprised a circus and carnival. Never a very easy partnership, the traveling fair soon went its separate way and the New World Circus prospered to become the largest traveling circus in England, and one which survived to see its two principal and long established rivals depart from the scene.

Billy Smart's Circus thrived on innovations — spectacles of a type not seen before in an English circus were introduced into his ring, but not allowed to swamp the essential circus background of the show. Ever a traveler with a keen eye for assimilating (and generally improving) new ideas for the circus, Billy with the immeasurable help of his three sons, Ronald, David and Billy Junior, dazzled the British public with his versions of what a modern circus should really look like. In his singling were seen some of the world's finest circus entertainers, whilst in the large hippodrome track which surrounded it, paraded sumptuous processions of characters from the Arabian Nights, from Fairy-tale Land, from the Four Seasons, or from the Wild West. Britain had never seen a circus like this one before, and took it to its heart in no uncertain manner. Television, which was spelling the doom for some shows, was pressed into service by Billy Smart and his circus, and judicious and well-timed appearances on this medium only helped to increase interest and to attract new crowds to the show.

Mr. Smart was a man of no affectations. I have seen him talking with a leading member of our Royal family, with the same rich Cockney brogue and mannerisms as I have with a humble circus worker — and charming both of them!

The last time I spoke to the great man was during the season of 1965. He was sitting outside his luxurious trailer at York, his giant blue big top built up in the shadow of the famous centuries old cathedral; a true monarch of all he surveyed. When I congratulated him upon keeping his show on the road, whilst others around him were folding up, he replied in characteristic fashion—"there's nothing wrong with the circus business, but you can't expect to run a circus from

a London office!" In his 72nd year he was still in action, as ever keeping a sharp eye on all that pertained to the successful running of his circus, an optimist and a hard worker from his early days.

Now he is gone and it is unlikely that we shall ever see his like again, but his name will live on in the show he created, and the show will also undoubtedly live on in the capable hands of Ronald, David, Billy Jr., and the rest of this distinguished circus family.

Billy Smart shown in the spotlight. Photo from the Frank Graves Collection.





Memories of a Biller

By DAVE PRICE

I spent many days like today in search of windows, walls and barns for the purpose of displaying circus advertising. Now I see more walls than any billposter wants to see. You see my days are now spent behind the big wall at the Tennessee State Prison. And the rule is strictly, "Post No Bills."

Maybe I should explain that last year I quit the road and came here to work as an Institutional Parole Officer (Please no cracks that anyone who would quit the road to become a parole officer needs to be in an institution).

Editor Pfening asked me to put down on paper a few of my favorite stories of the circus advance. I would like to dedicate them to Earle Milner, the founder of America's cheapest hotel chain. Without this man's help all billposters would have quit years ago and would now all be writing stories for *Bandwagon*.

The advance department, or bill car (as it is still called), of the circus is perhaps one of its most interesting if unnoticed aspects. Few books and no movies show that it exists at all. The smell of the sawdust seems to attract all the attention. And yet every day many miles down the line, from one to a dozen men (in past times as many as a hundred) are busy lithographing the store windows, posting the barns and tacking the poles so that another circus day can come to pass a week or two hence. We never see the elephants up ahead and few of us would recognize our own show on

the lot. In many respects we're not really circus people at all. But in our own world we have a circus just as exciting as that under the white tops.

First I would like to comment on the reputation that billers seem to have of close association with John Barleycorn. Some circus managers don't even use the word Billposter . . . the word is Drunken-billposter (one word, like Damnyankee). I want to state that the fable is unfounded and that I have no desire to perpetuate it. Therefore, I will have to leave out some of my best stories. I won't tell, for example, about the time we were billing Riverside for the Cristiani show and one of our lithographers broke his ankle doing the Mexican Hat Dance in a bar. Neither will I tell how our card man entertained a convention at our hotel in Port Huron by singing for them in the style of Elvis Presley. We were there for the Beatty show but gave them a rock and roll show instead.

Actually both of these incidents took place after the day's work was done and we all felt like a good time. Good stories also develop on the route. I remember on the Famous Cole car when one of the boys had just finished lining the windows of an empty with lithos and happened to notice that some merchandise had been left by the last occupant. At least something was on the back counter with sheets draped over it. The biller thought he'd have a look around so he pulled back the sheets to reveal a corpse ready for the

Large sheets of special paper were used by those shows that could afford them. This fine bill of the John Robinson band is about 15 sheets. It was used in 1923 and 1924. Pfening Collection.

casket. Seems that the store backed up to a funeral parlor and was used for storage by the mortician. The poor lithographer wasn't any good for the rest of the day.

You get used to unusual reactions from store keepers. Being cursed out is an everyday event. It was probably a biller who first said, "If I don't catch Hell before noon, I consider the day a total loss." My most unforgettable reaction from a merchant was a humdinger. It was while I was billing the Carson-Barnes show featuring Col. Tim McCoy, the last of the Pioneer Scouts and Dave Hoover, subjugator of ferocious African lions.

We were in the bayous of Louisiana and I was in a Cajun restaurant talking to the lady in charge. As soon as I explained what I wanted, she started crying hysterically and screamed over and over, "Please don't, please don't!" A crowd began to gather and thought I might be lynched for attempt to ravish or something. Just at the crucial moment, her brother arrived to explain that years ago some show had posted the outside of their windows so thoroughly that everyone thought they were out of business. They almost went broke before they

could get the windows scraped clean. Ever since then, the woman went off at the sight of a billposter. Well, it's all in a day's work.

A funny thing happened when I was working for Steve Kuzmich that ought to be told here. One of our billposters had taken a room in the attic of the hotel to save money. Naturally there was no telephone up there so when the building caught fire in the night the clerk had to go upstairs and wake the men. (The rest of us were called by phone.) The clerk was unable to rouse him and feared that he had succumbed to the smoke. The biller awoke to see the clerk break in his door. Obviously it was someone after his money. He grabbed his wallet and hustled toward an open window shouting, "Take one more step and I'll jump!" The blow-off came the next morning when the paper was headlined, "Circus Roustabout Threatens Suicide in Hotel Fire."

I'd better tell you about Charlie. When a biller asks, "Where's Charlie?", he isn't asking about the whereabouts of a man named Charles. He's asking where a good place is to throw away a bill or two that he has left. Sometimes car managers give the men more paper than a town will



hold. As they see red and swear blue when you bring back paper, it is sometimes wisest to Charlie a few bills that are left over. This is wasteful and makes little sense but carry a hod of paper a few years and you'll discard a sheet of paper occasionally yourself. I remember one time when Francis Kitzman noticed smoke coming from behind a fence where a biller happened to be waving his hat. Doubtless the reader is ahead of me by now. The man was burning a bundle of paper and was fanning it to make it burn faster.

Some of us were crossing a river via ferry boat when one of the guys happened to think what an ideal place the middle of the river would be to Charlie a few sheets he had in the truck. The bills were tied up but the string broke when the bundle hit the water. All you could see down stream were 1-sheet dates. They spread out like molasses on a plate. The car manager crossed a bridge several miles down the river a short time later. He casually glanced out the window at the water below and . . . you're getting ahead of me again aren't you?

I know of one case where a story came



This daub of the Lee Bros. Circus in 1925 is interesting because it shows (on right) a favorite trick of all old time billposters, wrapping an outhouse with a three sheet date. Pfening Collection.

out in the paper stating that the reporter had seen the biller of a particular show standing on a nearby mountain top throwing his paper to the winds. "A novel method of advertising," commented the reporter.

One time Elmer Kauffman was checking us out of a hotel when the clerk asked if we wanted "those posters." One of the boys got pretty embarrassed and a little light went on in Elmer's head. "Matter a'fact we do," Elmer said, and the clerk handed over a large bundle of lithos that had been abandoned in a dresser drawer.

Enough about Charlie. One winter I was on the advance of a little show called Sterling & Wallace. An irate farmer caught Arizona Jack Gagne posting his

Filling an "empty" was a main street lithographer's delight. An advance man of Heber Bros. Greater Shows, a wagon show out of Columbus, Ohio, is shown standing proudly with lithographing sticks in front of his handywork. Taken around 1917. Pfening Collection.



barn and was ready to call in the blue-coats. Jack explained that he would be glad to take down the bills but asked that he be allowed to go after a roller so that he could remove the stand of paper in one big piece. This, Jack said, would enable him to use the same paper over by simply unrolling it onto another barn. Jack was permitted to go after the roller but as I recall he never returned.

It is often necessary to come up with a good story in order to get paper up. One of the classics is seven-day paste. The owner of the building is told that a special paste is used which lets go after seven days. The bills will fall to the ground, leaving the building as clean as ever and the show will have gotten a week's advertising. Of course this gag is only good once on any given customer.

Speaking of paste letting go, they tell of opposition crews in the old days putting soap or yeast in each other's paste. This allowed the other show's paper to fall before the billposters were a half mile down the road, thus reducing their advertising.

Old timers have a lot of stories about opposition. I know of a case where Iye was thrown in the face of a biller by a man on another car. I think the man was blinded. Billing wars got pretty rough in those days. By the time I came along, all



Truck and wagon shows, as well as the two car railers, used big splashes of paper. Streamer titles like these used by the Zellmar Bros. show in 1926, were a must for good composition of a wall layout. More date sheets were usually posted in this type daub, than are shown here. Pfening Collection.

that was over. But I've pulled or covered a good bit of paper in this modern day. Francis Kitzman and I one time completely cleaned out a town billed by the crew of a show much larger than our's. They had made the mistake of lithographing only empties. (This is the mark of a weak crew to begin with.) In a couple of hours, we pulled every litho in town. We later got word that the big show's owners were pretty disgusted at their men for letting themselves be beaten by a little two-man bill car such as we had. They were lucky. Kitzman intended to post their truck with the paper of our show but couldn't locate it. He had done this trick before on other shows.

When you carry a hod day after day you are bound to meet a lot of interesting townspeople. Some of them are real nuts. My favorite was a fellow I met while I was on the Kelly-Miller advance in a small Kansas town. He let me put a couple of bills in the window, then called my attention to a pet crow he had caged up. "Shhh, listen," he said, "Say, 'Hello', Blackie, say, 'Hello'." No response. Again he instructed the bird, "Say, 'Hello', Blackie." I waited again and heard nothing from Blackie. After several tries he turned to me. "I've had Blackie for eleven years," he confided, "and he never has said a word."

Let me close with a story that happened to Elsie Kitzman when she was lithographing. Elsie spotted an empty like we all dream of. Windows big as Texas and clear as crystal. The owner lived several hundred miles away and there happened to be an open window in the back. Well in a case like that, what's

a biller to do? Naturally like the top-flight biller she was, "Shultz" (as we called her) started to make an entrance through the open window. Half way in, one leg in and one leg out, who should

walk up but a cop. This is one story you aren't going to get ahead of me on. Do you know what he did? He pulled her leg like I'm pulling your's.

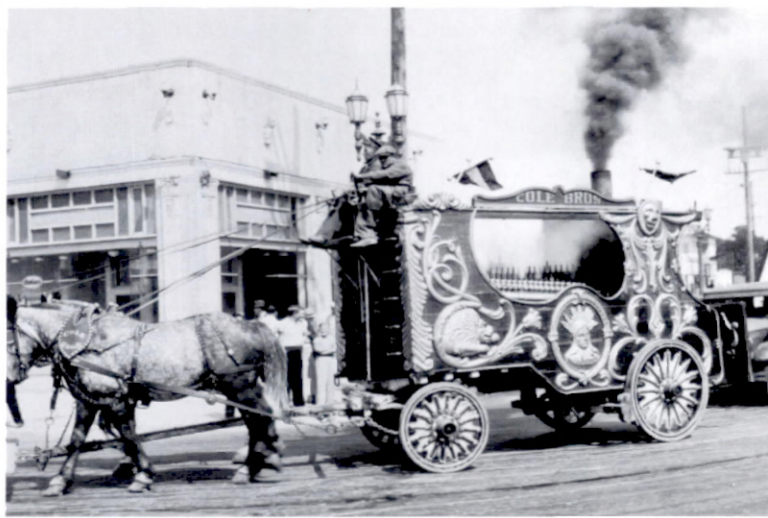
That's all, Brother.

MORE

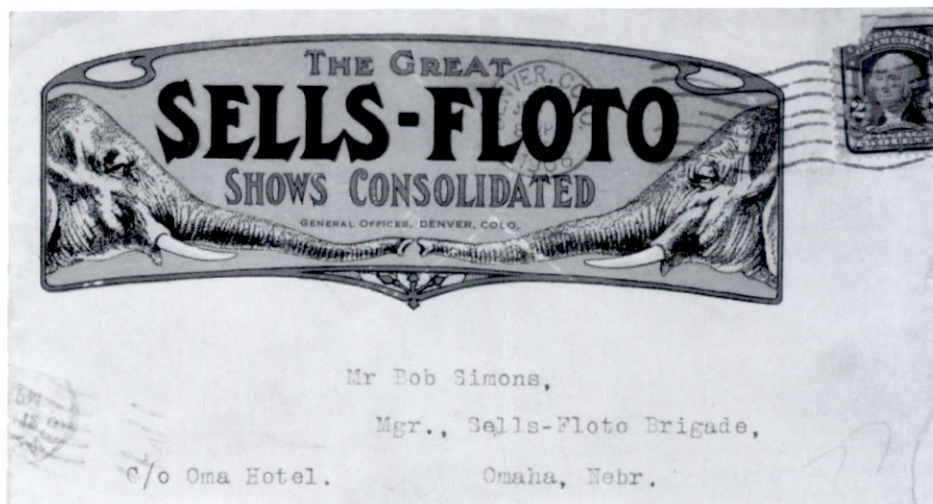
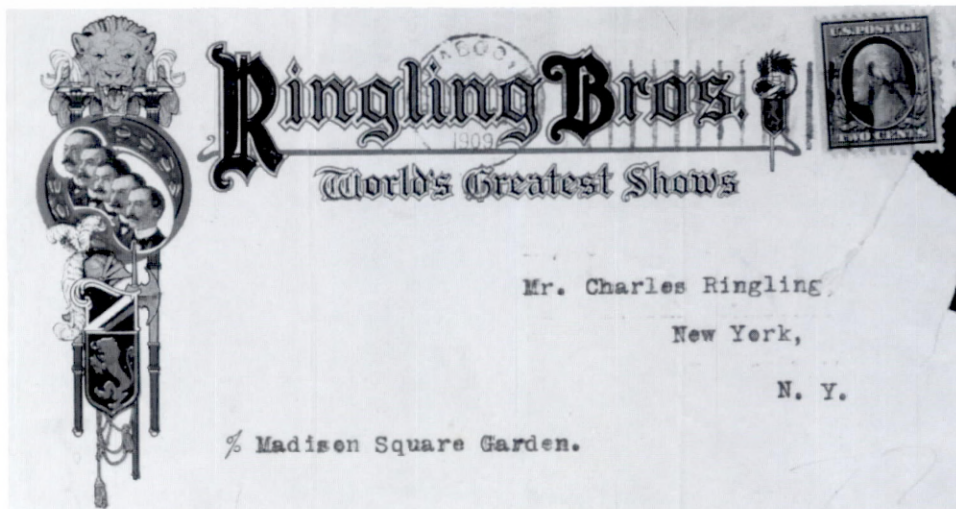
History of the Cole Bros. Circus 1935-40

by Joseph T. Bradbury

IN NEXT ISSUE



Bill Woodcock's Circus Envelopes





The full lot of the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show is shown during the final tour of Europe. This photo was taken on April 24, 1905 in Paris, France. Harold Dunn Collection.